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the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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No. 3

Sixteenth Year

January 21, 1949

Meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches will hold its first meeting from February 8 to 10, at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva.

The main reactions to the Amsterdam Assembly will be reviewed by the Committee, which will also consider what implications must be drawn from these reactions for the whole policy of the World Council.

Much of the Committee's work will involve carrying out decisions made by the Amsterdam Assembly. These include the setting up of a secretaryship for evangelism, creation of a Commission on women's work in the Church, establishment of a department of information for the World Council and action on proposals to hold area conferences throughout the world to enlist laymen for the witnessing task of the Church in all areas of life.

Another of the Committee's tasks will be to select the issues to be discussed at next summer's important meeting of the World Council's Central Committee, the 90-member group elected by the Amsterdam Assembly to deal with general issues of policy until the second Assembly in 1953. The Central Committee's meeting will be held in Chichester, England, in July.

The Executive Committee at its February meeting also will give attention to the problems of Churches in different parts of the world which are faced with very grave issues in their relations to the State.

Dr G.K.A. Bell, Bishop of Chichester, will preside over the sessions as chairman of the Committee. Vice-chairman and also expected to attend is Dr Franklin C. Fry, President of the United Lutheran Church in America.

Three of the World Council's six presidents also are expected to be present. They are Dr Marc Boegner, President of the Protestant Federation of France, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, of the Methodist Church of America, and Archbishop Germanos, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople for Western and Central Europe.

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Other members of the Executive are expected to be present: Bishop Berggrav, Oslo; the Rev. L. Cooke, England; the Rev. Dr A. Koechlin, Switzerland; Mr. Thomas C. Luke, Sierra Leone, West Africa; Dr Martin Niemöller, Germany; Canon R.A. Reeves, England; Dr Gordon A. Sisco, Canada; Mrs Leslie J. Swain, U.S.A.; and Mr. T.M. Taylor, Scotland.

A meeting of the Joint Committee of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches will be held on February 7, preceding the Executive. At this meeting, questions of cooperation with the Younger Churches and their relations to the two world organisations will be discussed.

E.P.S.Geneva

GERMANY

First Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany

The First Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) has been meeting from January 9 to 13, in Bethel, the well known centre of inner Mission work created by von Bodelschwingh. The Synod was composed of 120 delegates from the Evangelical Churches in all parts of Germany. At a time when there is so little communication and collaboration between Eastern and Western Germany, it is specially noteworthy that some 30 delegates from the various regions of Eastern Germany could be present. The difference between the situation of the Churches in the East and the situation of the Churches in the West came out very clearly in the discussions and had a decisive influence on the choice of the new leadership. At the same time the Synod expressed itself in no uncertain language about the need for real solidarity and close fellowship between these two main sections of the country.

It was characteristic of the Synod that the layman played a great rôle in the discussion. There was a strong demand that the layman should be given more responsibility in the life of the Churches. This came out in the choice of the Mayor of Essen (Dr Heinemann) as chairman of the Synod. And this was also the reason why a large majority voted for the inclusion of a fourth layman (from the ranks of Labour) in addition to the three who had already been chosen for the new Council of the Church. The Synod was attended by representatives of the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, and the American, British and French Religious Affairs Branches.

The new Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany was chosen and consists of the following: Bishop Dibelius (Berlin), Bishop Hahn (Saxony), Prälat Hartenstein (Hamburg), Dr Kreyssig (Magdeburg), Bishop Lilje (Hanover), Bishop Meiser (Munich), Mr. Mager (Dresden), President Niemöller, Dr Niesel (Wuppertal), Prof. Smend (Göttingen), and Dr Heinemann (Essen).

Bishop Dibelius was elected as chairman of the Council. In accepting his election Bishop Dibelius stated that he considered this decision as the expression of a recognition of the special significance at this time of the Churches of Eastern Germany. Bishop Lilje was elected vice-chairman of the Council. The strong desire was expressed that Dr Niemöller should continue to represent the Evangelical Church in Germany in its relation with the ecumenical movement.

A full discussion took place on relationships with the World Council and on the interpretation of the paragraph of the Constitution of the Evangelical Church in Germany concerning ecumenical relationships. This matter will be studied by the new Council but it was emphasised by all that, whatever the form of representation of the German Churches in the World Council may ultimately be, the solution should be such that the unity of the Evangelical Church in Germany is not jeopardised.

The Synod also discussed fully the problem of justice and law in the chaotic situation of Germany today. Very special consideration was given to the problem of the fourteen million German refugees and a message on this subject was adopted. Among the legislative decisions of the Synod one of the most important was the adoption of a new constitution of the "Hilfswerk" which regularises and clarifies the relations of the Hilfswerk both with the Evangelical Church as a whole and the regional Churches.

E.P.S.Geneva

GERMANY

Declaration by the Synod of the EKD

The Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) at its meeting in Bethel, Bielefeld, has drawn up a declaration regarding the refugee problem, addressed to "all those who are called upon to help the refugees - church authorities, international relief organisations, administrations, governments and occupying Powers".

The declaration states, among other observations, that "injustice breeds hatred and the lust for revenge; blind despair does not consider the consequences. Thus many are dreaming today of a new war as the only way out of their suffering. We must implore our brothers and sisters not to fall a prey to such illusory hopes, but to maintain an equable temper amid their trials. It is not war that we need, but a peace which will give us the chance to overcome our troubles by honest labour together."

The declaration calls upon the Governments concerned to see, in their efforts for a genuine peace, that the desperate condition of the refugees does not drag on to eternity. "It must be done away with as quickly as possible. But it cannot be overcome as long as those responsible cannot or will not create an economic situation ensuring for the entire population, including the refugees, a level of existence worthy of human beings. Only a peace that lets men live can give the chance of reconstruction, can promise homes to the homeless, daily bread to the starving, justice to the outlawed, and its recompense to Christian toil."

The following words are addressed to the German public; "We Germans, in the East and in the West, confined within the narrowest of spaces, and still denied freedom to form our political, economic and cultural life for ourselves under conditions of social justice, must in these days do all that man can do to bear our burdens together and to procure equal rights for one another."

Church communities in particular are begged to do all they can for the refugees, and in this way to bear witness to Christian brotherhood.

E.P.S.Geneva

GREAT BRITAINThe Archbishop of Canterbury on Church and State
in Eastern Europe

The arrests of Bishop Ordass, Lutheran Bishop of Budapest, and subsequently of Cardinal Mindszenty, Primate of the Roman Catholic Church of Hungary were mentioned by Dr Fisher, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his presidential address to the Joint Synod of the Convocation of Canterbury held in Westminster Church House on January 13. The Archbishop referred to these two recent events "which gravely affect both the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Churches on the Continent and which must grievously increase our sense of the dangers to which the Western Churches are exposed in a large part of Eastern Europe."

"In the case of Bishop Ordass", said the Archbishop, "the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (see EPS No. 43, 1948) made careful enquiry and was satisfied that the charges against him were a mere excuse on the part of the Government to justify an action taken on quite other grounds. And there can be no doubt that the same is true in the case of the Cardinal.

"In fact both the Bishop and the Cardinal had refused to accept Government policy with regard to their schools and had used all legitimate means to oppose it. Both were fearless and outspoken in their resistance. Both resisted because they were convinced that the Christian training of children was at stake..."

"In fact", concluded the Archbishop, "we are witnessing a deadly struggle between the Christian faith and the Christian Church on the one side, and on the other, a Communism which will not tolerate any form of the Christian Church unless it be subservient to itself and which (as we know from much evidence) even when it tolerates it, only too often takes care by insidious means to frustrate its activities, to sap its life and to cut off from it boys and girls as they grow up. Now and again, as in Hungary, a notable and outstanding Christian leader is removed; but the process goes on all the time, denying the fundamental liberties which belong to man as a child of God, eating into the life of the Church and imposing a faith, rooted in Marxian atheism, which is incompatible with the Christian faith. I have through the World Council expressed the sympathy of the Church of England with the Lutheran Church in Hungary; so now here I express the sympathy of the Church of England with the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary which in the person of its Cardinal has suffered this grave assault. And I am sure that in this I speak for the whole Convocation of Canterbury."

E.P.S.Geneva

UNITED STATESProtestant Missions on Indonesian Conflict

The Foreign Missions Conference of North America, which represents 102 Protestant mission boards, as its 55th annual meeting on January 7, held in Buck Hill Falls, Pa. (USA), adopted a resolution requesting that the United States representative on the Security Council of the United Nations be instructed to demand the withdrawal of the Dutch Army to its lines of December 19, 1948, and the release of Indonesian Republican leaders without "reservation or restriction".

The Conference called on the Administration to hold in abeyance any further Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands Government until it complies fully with all demands made by the Security Council.

It also urged the Administration to press for renewed negotiations through the Good Offices Committee until the establishment of an arbitration or conciliation commission.

The resolution added:

"A European nation of democratic traditions and outstanding devotion to the Christian faith has, by sudden attack upon the Indonesian Republic and imprisonment of its leaders, violated the letter and the spirit both of its profession in these matters and of directives of the United Nations. This unjustifiable resort to arms is a denial of human brotherhood and of the basic Christian principle that men everywhere have the right of self-determination."

"These acts have already met with the disapproval, publicly expressed, of many Christian leaders in the Netherlands. Leaders of government in free nations of Asia have been alarmed and resentful because of this unwarranted invasion, which has only served to create disunity among nations and tends to foster an Asian bloc in world affairs."

E.P.S.Geneva

INDIA

Tributes to Missionaries

Tributes to the work of Christian missionaries were paid by Indian State leaders at the centenary celebrations of the Malabar Christian College at Calicut. Among those praising the missionaries were C. Rajagopalachari, Governor-General of India, and Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, Dewan of Mysore.

The Governor-General predicted that Christianity "will continue to flourish in all parts of India for the government of new India is no enemy to any religion... We are grateful not only for the educational work done by the Christian colleges and schools but also for such religious campaigns as were associated with them."

The Dewan of Mysore hailed Christian missions, especially in South India, for having done a great deal of useful work. "But for them", he said, "a very large and significant part of the population would have gone without literacy, without the blessings of knowledge and without enlightenment of modern progress".

Referring to the criticism that the work of missionaries is to convert members of other faiths to their own, the Dewan held that this was a narrow view. What is more important, he said, is that they have helped the followers of Hinduism and other religions to re-examine their own teachings. EPS. Geneva

CEYLON

S.C.M. Asian Leaders' Conference

A conference of the Student Christian Movement's leaders in Asia was held during Christmas 1948 at Kandy, Ceylon. The conference was organised by the World's Student Christian Federation. In spite of great difficulties regarding

finance, transport and the political situation, 90 delegates reached Kandy after many adventures and delays. The delegates came from Burma, Ceylon, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaya, Pakistan, Philippines and Siam, together with Australia and New Zealand, and there were visitors from France, Great Britain and Sweden.

The meeting was characterized by a deep sense of Christian purpose and it will undoubtedly have a profound effect upon the Student Christian Movements in the Asiatic countries concerned. A moving letter was sent by 70 delegates to the S.C.M. of the Netherlands in connection with the fighting in Indonesia.

E.P.S. Geneva

Television of Religious Subjects

The television of church services and of such features as plays and talks dealing not only with ecclesiastical subjects but also with the relationships between Christianity and the varied aspects of human life and activities is still in its infancy but promises interesting developments in the use of this new radio technique.

A correspondent of the "Church Times" points out that the Television Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation transmits for an average of two and half hours each day of the week and that in view of restricted studio space at present available "it is plain that only a small percentage of that time can be used for religion. A performance of Miss Dorothy Sayers' Nativity play was transmitted to an audience of 200,000 viewers on Christmas Eve.

A large proportion of the television stations in the United States transmit religious services, ceremonies, talks and features. A television station called WPIX, owned by the New York Daily News, has a regular "television chapel". A devotional service for the deaf recently transmitted by this station showed a choir of five deaf persons, who maintained a rhythm by the use of hands and fingers, and a sermon delivered in sign language and prayer response registered in the same manner.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY-UNITED STATES

Study Visits for Church Leaders

Plans to send selected German representatives to the United States for three months in view of studying various aspects of American life, including religious activities, are being made by the U.S. Military Government in Germany.

As many as 600 Germans may be involved in the project, which is part of a large-scale plan of reorientation and cultural exchange. Their travel expenses to and from the States, as well as salaries and living expenses, will be paid by the American government. For the duration of their visit they will be, for all practical purposes, in U.S. government employment.

The Religious Affairs Branch of the U.S. Military Government hopes to send over about 80 Germans, half of whom will be engaged in specifically Protestant projects, the remainder devoting themselves to Roman Catholic or inter-creedal work.

The Federal Council of Churches is being asked to sponsor seven projects for the German Protestants. It is proposed that the International Council of Religious Education and the National Lutheran Council each sponsor six projects, and the National Religion and Labour Foundation one. The National Catholic Welfare Conference has already assumed responsibility for German Roman Catholic visitors. The National Conference of Christians and Jews will be responsible for the German interfaith representatives.

"The function of the German Protestant and Catholic visitors", the government announcement said, "is to familiarise themselves thoroughly with specific areas of American church life. The intention is that, having gained such familiarity, they will return to Germany and be able to engraft in German church life much of what they have learned in the States".

The undertaking is intended to "promote peaceful and constructive relations in the postwar world, which shall be for the healing of the nations."

E.P.S.Geneva

HUNGARY

Concordate Between the State and the Lutheran Church

An agreement calling for cooperation between the Hungarian Lutheran Church and the Government was formally signed in Budapest on December 14, 1948. The signatories were Julius Ortutay, Minister of Cults, on behalf of the Government, and Bishop Zoltan Thuroczy and Lay Inspector Zoltan Mady on behalf of the Lutheran Church.

"This is not a treaty nor a business deal", declared Bishop Thuroczy, "but an honest endeavour of the Church to respect the rights of the State and of the State to show a reciprocal attitude towards the Church".

The Concordate contains the following points:

The Church and the State will form a common commission to issue new laws concerning the religion and especially the religious education of children.

The Government declares that it will be every way assure the full freedom of religion. The Church for her part acknowledges that the State has up to now maintained and protected the freedom of religion and even supported the efforts of the Church.

The Government guarantees to the Church freedom of worship in churches and official buildings, in homes and open places, freedom of the church press, of spreading the Bible and religious literature, holding conferences, religious instruction and the ecclesiastical work of mercy... The Government guarantees her the right to maintain social institutions...

The State will reduce its financial support on a sliding scale. After December 31, 1968, all support will cease.

The Church yields to the decision of the nationalisation of church schools. The teachers will be employed by the State. All school-buildings with their equipments and funds as well as the territories belonging to them, will be-

come property of the State. However, this nationalisation does not refer to theological seminaries and departments, deaconess institutions, and schools training voluntary workers for the Church. The Church will continue to have the right to give religious instruction in the schools taken over by the State.

The Church will also in the future offer prayers on behalf of the Hungarian Republic, its President and the Government. E.P.S.Geneva

GREAT BRITAIN"The Friends of Reunion"

The "Friends of Reunion", a society which played an important part in developing ecumenical ideals in Britain before the war, entered upon a new phase of its existence at a renewed annual conference, held from December 13 to 15, 1948 at High Leigh, Hoddesdon. It was attended by rather more than forty members. At the first session Professor C.H. Dodd spoke on "Amsterdam and Reunion", emphasising the importance of the discussions which took place in Section I at Amsterdam on "The Universal Church in God's Design". He was followed by the Rev. O.S. Tomkins, secretary of the Faith and Order Department of the World Council of Churches, who spoke on "Ecumenism and the Local Church". There was need, he said, not only for joint presentation of the Gospel but also for joint Christian witness in everyday life.

Mr. W.G. Symons, a factory inspector from Sheffield, speaking as a layman, reminded the theologians that at the level of practical results there was a good deal to be said for disunion. He mentioned the healthy aspect of competition and freedom from stagnation under a monopoly and reminded them that the history of English Nonconformity had illustrated the vigorous responsibility which laymen had exercised in such Churches. How far did the clergy seem to acquire more influence as the result of ecclesiastical amalgamation? Unity, he stressed, must be justified at the deepest level or not at all.

A congregationalist, the Rev. John Huxtable, insisted upon the necessity for organic union and pointed out that this objective might be delayed if the Churches became satisfied with the sufficiency of cooperation between them as they are.

Under the guidance of the Rev. C. Kingley Williams, the revised statement of aims of the Society was examined and adopted. This brings the "Friends of Reunion" into the present day setting of the ecumenical movement, as a voluntary association whose aim is the organic union of the Churches.

E.P.S.Geneva

FRANCECorrection

We have been asked to print a correction regarding the statement in E.P.S. No. 1 that "French pastors" had received gifts of \$40. The donation was in fact from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to the pastors of the Reformed Church of France exclusively. E.P.S.Geneva

